

Recent Study Shows How Much of Our Nations Food is Wasted

According to a recent study by the University of Arizona, each American throws away 1.3 pounds of food a day, which amounts to 474.5 pounds per person, per year.

The study shows that, not only is edible food discarded that could feed people who need it, but the rate of loss, even partially corrected, could save U.S. consumers and corporations tens of billions of dollars each year.

Research also shows that by measuring how much food is actually being brought into households, a clearer picture of that end of the food stream is beginning to emerge.

On average, households waste:

- 14 percent of their food purchases.
- 15 percent of that includes products still within their expiration date but never opened.
- An average family of four currently tosses out an estimated \$590 per year, just in meat, fruits, vegetables and grain products.
- Nationwide, household food waste alone adds up to \$43 billion, making it a serious economic problem.

What You Can Do To Reduce the Amount of Food Wasted in Your Household

- Buy only what you will use. How often do you have to clean out rotten food from your refrigerator? If you are consistently disposing of large quantities of food, consider changing your shopping habits. Shop for less food more often, or try planning your meals ahead of time and only buying those ingredients necessary.
- Buy in bulk, you can get smaller amounts of staple items, such as cereals, grains, spices, etc., instead of buying a whole box or bottle of something that you may only need a teaspoon of.
- Get creative with leftovers and know what lurks in the refrigerator and pantry that needs to be used while it is still useable.
- Compost what you can. (Call WRS at 483-4400 for composting information)
- Donate non-perishable food. Don't throw it away just because you're cleaning out your cupboards.



Cutting food waste would also go a long way toward reducing serious environmental problems. The study estimates that reducing food waste by half could reduce adverse environmental impacts by 25 percent through reduced landfill use, soil depletion and applications of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.